



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

LETTERS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON TO CHARLES
WILLSON PEALE, 1796-1825.

BY HORACE W. SELLERS.

MONTICELLO, June 5th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:—

I have received a proposition from Europe which may perhaps be turned to account for the enlargement of your Museum. The hereditary prince of Parma, a young man of letters, is 22 years of age, lately married to a daughter of the K. of Spain, is desirous of augmenting his cabinet of natural history by an addition of all the American subjects of the 3 departments of nature, and will give those of Europe which can be procured or of which he has duplicates in exchange—perhaps it would suit you to enter into this kind of commerce—if so, be so good as to inform me by letter how far you would choose to enter into the exchange: I defer writing my answer to him until I hear from you—the intervention of the Spanish minister at Philadelphia would sometimes perhaps be used; sometimes perhaps my own; and shipments could be made to and from Genoa & Leghorn. I am with great esteem, Dear Sir,

Your friend & servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, February 21st, 1801.

DEAR SIR:—

I have to thank you for a copy of your introductory lecture received some time since, & not before acknowledged for want of time. I have read it with great pleasure, and lament that while I have been so near to your valuable collection, occupations much less pleasing to me have always put it out of my power to avail myself of it. May I ask the

favor of you to present my request to your son that he would be so good as to make a copy of the portrait he took of me, and of same size? It is intended for a friend who has expressed a wish for it; and when ready I will give directions to whom it shall be delivered if he will be so good as to drop me a line mentioning it and the price. I am with great and affectionate esteem, Dear Sir

Your friend & servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

P.S. Only the inner frame will be necessary.

C. W. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, July 29th, 1801.

DEAR SIR:—

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of June 29th and July 25th to congratulate you on the prospect you have of obtaining a complete skeleton of the great incognitum, and the world on there being a person at the critical moment of the discovery who has zeal enough to devote himself to the recovery of these great animal monuments. Mr. Smith, the Secretary of the Navy will give orders immediately on the Navy agent at New York to lend you a pump. The same gentleman acting in the war-office instead of General Dearbourne who is absent, will give an order to General Irvine at Philadelphia to lend you a couple of tents. It has been a great mortification to me to find myself in such a state as to be unable to come forward and assist you in resources for this enterprise; but the outfit of my office has been so amazingly heavy as to place me under greater pecuniary restraints for a while than I ever experienced. I trust they will not continue so long but that I shall be able to throw in my contribution before you will cease to want it. I set out tomorrow morning for Monticello to pass there the months of August and September. Whenever your skeleton is mounted, I will certainly pay it a visit. Accept assurances of my great esteem and attachment.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

C. W. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, January 16th, 1802.

DEAR SIR :—

I received last night your favor of the 12th instant. No person on earth can entertain a higher idea than I do of the value of your collection nor give you more credit for the unwearied perseverance and skill with which you have prosecuted it, and I very much wish it could be made public property, but as to the question whether I think that the U. S. would encourage or provide for the establishment of your Museum here? I must not suffer my partiality to it to excite false expectations in you, which might eventually be disappointed. You know that one of the great questions which has decided political opinion in this country is whether Congress is authorized by the constitution to apply the public money to any but the purposes specially enumerated in the constitution? those who hold them to the enumeration, have always denied that Congress has any power to establish a National Academy. Some who are of this opinion, still wish Congress had power to favor science, and that an amendment should be proposed to the constitution, giving them such power specifically, if there were an union of opinion that Congress already possessed the right, I am persuaded the purchase of your Museum would be the first object on which it would be exercised, but I believe the opinion of a want of power to be that of the majority of the legislature.

I have for a considerable time been meditating a plan of a general university for the state of Virginia, on the most extensive and liberal scale that our circumstances would call for and our faculties meet—were this established, I should have made your Museum an object of the establishment, but the moment is not arrived for proposing this with a hope of success. I imagine therefore the legislature of your own state furnishes at present the best prospect. I am much pleased at the success which has attended your labors on the Mammoth. I understand you have not the frontal bone, if this be so, I have heard of one in the western

country which I could and would get for you, on this I need your information. I shall certainly pay your labors a visit, but when, heaven knows. Accept my friendly salutation and respect.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

CHARLES W. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, May 5th, 1802.

DEAR SIR :—

I am this moment setting out on a short visit to Monticello, but a thought coming into my head which may be useful to your son who is carrying the Mammoth to Europe, I take time to hint it to you. My knowledge of the scene he will be on enables me to suggest what might not occur to him a stranger. When in a great City he will find persons of every degree of wealth, to jumble all these into a room together I know from experience is very painful to the decent part of them, who would be glad to see a thing often, & would not regard paying every time but that they revolt at being mixed with pickpockets, chimney sweeps etc. Set three different divisions of the day therefore at three different prices, selecting for the highest when the beau monde can most conveniently attend ; the 2nd price when merchants and respectable citizens have most leisure, and the residue for the lower description. A few attending at the highest price will countervail many of the lowest and be more agreeable to themselves and to him. I hope and believe you will make a fortune by the exhibition of that one, and that when tired of shewing it you will sell it there for another fortune. No body wishes it more sincerely than I do. Accept my assurances of this and my great esteem.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

C. W. PEALE, Esq.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3rd, 1802.

DEAR SIR :—

Immediately on the receipt of your favor of Oct. 28th, I wrote to a friend of mine, Mr. Michael Rowyer, who owns and resides at the Sweet Springs, on the subject of the bones you mention as lately found in a cave of Greenbriar county,

and which are probably of the *Megalonyx*. I observed to him that I had learned that the finder was preparing to send them to you; that if that was done, it was all that was desired, but if not done I begged he would procure & pack them securely in a box, and forward them by water, to wit, down James River to Messrs. Gibson & Jefferson merchants at Richmond, whom I would instruct to pay all expenses and forward the box on to you in Philadelphia. This I am in hopes will secure them to you, and I am happy in every occasion wherein I can render you a service. The newly found half head of the Mammoth being under the view of Doctor Samuel Brown, cannot be placed in a better channel.

I am happy to hear of your son's safe arrival in London; the first moments are always the most difficult, but I have no doubt the first information you shall receive after the exhibition shall be opened, will be as favorable as you can expect. In the meantime let us omit no opportunity of completing the skeleton you possess. Perhaps it would not be amiss to publish a list of the bones you already have, and of those wanting as far as may be presumed of an animal whose structure we do not yet actually and fully know.

Accept assurances of my great esteem and best wishes,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. C. W. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7th.

DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of December 23rd was duly received, and I am in hopes the Polygraph got safe to hand & that you found it in good condition except so much as concerned the writing of the upper part of the page. I believe I mentioned to you in a former letter that if the one of yours with which I am now writing was not for your own use, I should be contented to retain it instead of mine, paying whatever it will cost to put mine into as perfectly good condition but this is as you please. I send a draught for

the fund of my grandson. I mentioned to you formerly that I had left to his father to furnish his clothing & pocket money; this was merely because were he disposed to go too far in these, I had rather the restraint should move from his father than myself, but the moderation he has proved, and the disposition to devote himself to his studies rather than to frequent dissipated or expensive company, renders all distinction of funds in future unnecessary, & particularly that those I furnish will be open to all his wants. I salute with friendship and respect.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

C. W. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, February 27th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

Mr. Latrobe promised a few days ago to write to you to have me furnished with a polygraph of two pens, and that his experience would enable him to give some directions about it which would be useful. He was to desire particularly that there should be a drawer in each end, without any partitions in the drawers, because I would have them made here to suit my own convenience. I should also prefer the fountain ink-pots by which I mean those made thus [*design*] their best size is of about $1\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter or square.

Mr. Latrobe informs me you have one of Brunelle's polygraphs procured by your son Rembrandt while in London. I am afraid I shall be thought unreasonable in asking your permission to see it here, and yet I am persuaded that if packed in an external box and directed to me it would come by the stage in perfect safety, & especially if under the care of some person who should be coming here. Trial alone can enable one to estimate new and curious inventions. Perhaps you can also inform me what such an one costs in London should I like it well enough to send for one, and to whom I should address myself there. If you can venture yours here, it shall be returned at any date you fix and under my guarantee as to loss or injury coming & going.

Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great esteem.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, Mar. 1, 1804.

DEAR SIR :—

I received last night your favor of the 26th and thank you for the pen accompanying it, which seems to perform well. I had written to you on the 27th ult. on the subject of the Polygraph. The reduction of the size which you propose for a future trial would certainly be a great improvement, its present great bulk being disagreeable. I observe too that after one has adjusted the pens by the gage, one of them will require to be a little moved by trial to make them write with equal strength, this being to be done by moving the pen by hand in its sheath, it is pushed or pulled too much and is deranged. Were there still an interior sheath for the pen which screwed by a few threads only into the present sheath which would then be the middle one a single turn or half turn would adjust it perfectly, and the pen and two screwed sheaths be still withdrawn from the outer one for mending as easily as at present, but you will probably think of a better way. I sincerely wish you success in the new institution you now meditate as well as in everything else you undertake. By the immense collection of treasures contained in your Museum you have deserved well of your country, and laid a foundation for their ever cherishing your memory. Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great esteem.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

CHARLES W. PEALE, Esq.

Thomas Jefferson presents his salutations to Mr. Peale. He received last night his favor of the 5th. He will leave this place for Monticello a fortnight hence, and will be absent 5 or 6 weeks, which he mentions now because as the Polygraphs will arrive after his departure his acknowledgment of their reception and his return of Brunelle's cannot be till his return to this place in May.

WASHINGTON, March 9th, 1804.

WASHINGTON, March 30th, 1804.

DEAR SIR :—

Tomorrow I set out for Monticello, and very fortunately I received last night the two polygraphs. This morning I tried them. I was charmed with the ingenuity and beautiful workmanship of Brunell's, and proportionably mortified on trial to find I could not produce a copy of a single letter distinct, although I perfectly understood the action of all its parts, and saw that there was nothing deranged in the least except perhaps that the pen frames did not hang exactly in the same vertical. I gave it up therefore as a beautiful bagatelle, and I have repacked it, and with the one which Mr. Latrobe lent me have desired Mr. Barnes, my agent here, to send them by the first safe vessel to Philadelphia, paying their freight here. To him also be so good as to address a note of the cost of the one of yours which you have sent me, and he will immediately remit it. With this one I am now writing. I find it considerably improved on that of Mr. Latrobe; but it is exceedingly stiff; I am afraid to attempt to remedy this by loosening the screws at the joints. Indeed I suspect the stiffness proceeds from the great strength of the long spiral cord. The greatest desideratum in it is the adjusting screw, for after setting the pens by the gage, they still want a hair's breadth adjustment which it is difficult to make by the hand. Brunell's has that screw. I like your idea of making them not to shut up as a box, but to lie in one piece on the table and have a movable lid to cover it, the gallows being fixed. I think in this way it might be reduced 4 inches one way and 6 or 8 I. the other. The great surface it occupies is very objectionable, as the smallness of Brunell's is one of its beauties. Should any other criticisms on it occur on further trial I will communicate them according to your desire, it being easier to object than solve. Accept my salutations & best wishes.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

MONTICELLO, April 23rd, 1804.

DEAR SIR :—

Your Polygraph gave me so much satisfaction that I thought it worth while to bestow some time in contriving one entirely suited to my own convenience. It was therefore the subject of my meditations on the road, and on my arrival here I made the drawings which I now send you. I have adopted your idea of having it in the form of a desk to sit on one's writing table, and not that of a box to shut up. I have reduced the size, by getting rid of all useless space, which was chiefly the margins on the outside of the machinery; but as I had not yours present, it is possible the reduction especially in the north and south dimension, may be greater than can be admitted without reducing the size of the parallelograms, on the space they work in, neither of which would I venture to do, lest it might injure the action of the machinery, for I well know that hypothesis is one thing and experience another. If therefore I have not given as much field for the parallelograms to move on, as they have in yours, my drawings must be altered in that particular. As I know the principal defect in yours is the liableness of the writing bed under the brass frame, to warp, I have here suggested a method of guarding against that, without resorting to slate. In this I have very considerable faith; but these triangular boards, with the necessary breadth of the drawer (from which not an hair's breadth can be spared) by pinching the two side pieces in two, leave not, I am afraid, a sufficient bond between the fore and the aft part. The bottom board to be sure offers a considerable means of binding them together; so would the top board which forms the bed under the parallelograms, if clamped to the triangular boards with thin plates of iron screwed on. It would be important in this case that the grain of the top and bottom boards should run north and south. Should this not be a strong enough connection, then by letting the triangular board opposite the separation of the drawers run through to the back it might form the spine and main

strength of the whole machine, and would only add one inch to the dimension from east to west, making it $20\frac{1}{2}$ in. instead of 23 in. Should I also have made it so short from north to south (to wit 23 in.) as not to leave as much room for the play of the parallelograms as yours have, so that it may be necessary to enlarge it in that direction, then, by keeping the breadth and height of the drawers to what I have drawn them, the side pieces will not be so nearly pinched in two and will be considerable strengtheners of the junction of the fore and aft parts. In some, or all of these ways, or better which will occur to yourself or your workman, this difficulty may be perhaps got over. Instead of the cover sliding over the machinery in a semicircle as you propose which including unnecessary space would look too bulky, I have proposed a light cover to take off and on, which you will see described. The screw for adjusting one of the pens, (the right hand one which is most convenient for the copying one) to a hair's breadth after it has been generally adjusted by the gage, is indispensable. It will only require 3 tubes one within the other, instead of the 2 you use. The outer one you know is fixed to the machinery, and the one within that holds the pen and lets it turn to its proper square for writing, but an inner one still might be inserted in this and have a few threads of a screw to adjust it to a hair's breadth, the pen being held in this inner one. In this case by turning the inmost tube within the middle one the pen would be raised or depressed by the thread of the screw, and by turning the middle one within the other one, it would be placed square with the line of writing. The outer fixed tube would of course have to be enlarged.

As you were so kind as to say that when you should have made one on the improved plan, you would exchange it for the box one which you sent me, I have now to ask the favor of you to have one made immediately on the plan I have proposed, and forwarded to me at Washington by water. I desired Mr. Barnes to inquire of you the price of the former, and remit you the money which I hope he

has done. Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great esteem.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

WASHINGTON, May 21st, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

I received last night your favor of the 19th and am sorry you have paid so much respect to my dimensions as to puzzle yourself with them, and still more to alter the writing machinery. They were meant to be entirely subject to your correction, and they are still so. I made the drawing from memory, and have seen since I returned here and have had a polygraph under my eye that I had not left room enough for the horizontal rhombuses to move on. Whether they will perform their functions equally well if made only rhomboidal you will be able to judge, and to yourself I leave it entirely. As soon as the desk is ready I shall be glad to receive it, because, after trial, I shall wish a second and perhaps a third to be sent to Monticello in time to meet me there by the latter end of July. The danger of dislocating the machinery by the jolting of the stage will render a conveyance hither by water safest. Accept my friendly salutations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

P.S. Would it not be worth while to endeavor to provide a regulator for the degree of tension and resistance which the long wire cord or spiral spring shall give, so as to adapt it to the writer's particular hand, whether strong or weak. It is a too great degree of resistance of this spring in the polygraph I now use, which makes it very fatiguing to the hand, and gives a cramped and disguised appearance to the writing.

C. W. PEALE, Esq.

WASHINGTON, June 14th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

I send you by this post the drawings for another Polygraph desk. I take for its foundation that I am now

writing on, which is indeed very nearly perfect. Wherever therefore I have not proposed an alteration, I wish the new one to be exactly as the old. I adopt exactly the same length and breadth of desk. The position of the writing machinery is left precisely the same, & the machinery itself. The changes are as follows: 1—the inkholders are moved a little higher up, and placed in a tray. 2—the desk is considerably shallower; this is an essential change for the better. 3—the drawers are consequently shallower, and that for the spare ink pot and pens is independent of the paper drawer. 4—the ledge or rule for holding a book is fixed more out of the way. 5—I propose that all the locks shall open with the same key. Having a good desk before my eyes I have been able to draw the improved one without risking any imperfection, & would therefore now pray that the cabinet work may be done to a hair's breadth according to my drawing. Of yourself personally I have one favor to ask, which is to be so good as to see to the perfect adjustment of the pens and writing machinery, as on that depends the whole value of the machine, and the one now desired being to go into the country where we have no workmen, any defect or failure in it will be irremediable. When done I will pray you to have it well packed in a box perfectly watertight (as it will be exposed in an open boat many days going up the river) and direct it to me to the care of Messrs. Gibson & Jefferson, merchants, Richmond, shipping it for that place, and advising me of it, & to be done with as little delay as possible, that it may arrive at Monticello by the time I get there myself. I should be glad to have, in addition to the steel pens, cases for common pens which are best when one wishes to write fairer than common. Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great esteem.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

P.S. After trial of the one now desired, I shall probably have occasion for one or two more.

C. W. PEALE, Esq.

WASHINGTON, June 20th, 1804.

DEAR SIR—

I enclose you two essays of Mr. Burwell at my profile. I also enclose you the receipt of Capt. Ellwood for your Polygraph—he sails this day—besides that the small round inkpot of $1\frac{3}{4}$ diam. or square one of $1\frac{1}{2}$ I. and only 1 I. deep, necessary for perfecting your machine, you will find it necessary to throw away the common stopper which rises $\frac{1}{2}$ i. above the top of the pot, and to substitute a cork with a thin plate of brass and ring on the top, lying level with that. thus [*design*] the ring falling down on the top of the cork. You will perceive that the steel pen with which I write this, sheds its ink too fast. How shall I repair it when it gets out of order? Should you find the small black ink pots above described, or glass ones, I should be glad of a set for this polygraph by any safe opportunity. Accept my friendly salutations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

C. W. PEALE, Esq.

MONTICELLO, Aug. 19th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:

I received two days ago the polygraph lately sent me. It arrived in good order except that the forked spiral spring which suspends the bar with the friction cylinder was broken. In attempting to connect it again by links it broke repeatedly, and tho' I succeeded at last so as to use it, yet it is become so short as to perform its functions poorly. Perhaps you could send me a new spring (for that portion only) by post, protecting it between two slips of wood or pasteboard; the post is but 4 days from Philadelphia here.

On 5 months full trial of the Polygraph with two pens, I can now conscientiously declare it a most precious invention. Its superiority over the copying press is so decided that I have entirely laid aside that. I only lament it had not been invented 30 years sooner. I lament nothing more than the not having been able to preserve copies of my letters during the war, which to me would now have

been a consoling possession. The alterations in the two polygraphs made for me are solid improvements; and liking as I do to write with a quill pen rather than a steel one, I value the last pencases you sent me because they admit by their screws so delicate an adjustment. As the quill pen requires to be kept in the ink, I add a latch behind the left standard, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, which turns down in front of the top of the pen, & holds it perpendicular in the ink socket. Without this the pen hangs by its point which crooks too much to be used. Instead too of the two large pannels of the cover being of mahogany, I substitute wire netting, which equally protects the machinery, and at the same time admits air and light. It is not in my power to inform you of the places from which the minerals came which I sent you, because I have forgotten the name of the gentleman who sent them, and therefore cannot turn to his letter, if ever I should recollect it, or otherwise accidentally find his letter, I will send it to you. Accept my friendly salutations and assurances of great esteem.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

MONTICELLO, September 15th, 1804.

DEAR SIR :—

Your letter containing the spiral spring was received in due time. A mode of constructing your polygraph which might render it more profitable occurred to me, and as it took me less time to give verbal directions to my workmen for a model, than to make a drawing for you, I have had a model made which I send you by this post. It is of half size in all its dimensions, whence you will see that in full size it will not be larger than a very moderate portfolio. Whether any or all its parts may be of any use, you will judge. I was not satisfied whether the admitting the North side to have a sidelong motion, preserving its parallelism, and also a north and south motion, might not be found useful, and therefore the interior hole in the brass is made. It

will require inkpots with effective stoppers for traveling, which are easily made.

If the publication of the six lines of my letter of Aug. 19th will be of service to you, certainly they are at your service, but as they were hastily and carelessly written be so good as to strike out "I only lament etc" to "possession," and insert instead of it, "I only regret it had not been invented 30 years sooner, as it would have enabled me to preserve copies of my letters during the war, which to me would now have been a consoling possession." Let me know whether the idea of the model answers and accept my friendly salutations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, October 6th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

Your favor of September 23rd was received on my arrival here, and I have no doubt that between yourself and Mr. Hawkins the polygraph will be rendered perfect. For the one I have at Monticello you were so kind as to send me a pair of brass pen-cases with the screw top and for receiving the small bit of a quill pen, which I found so much better suited to my hand writing and so easily susceptible of nice adjustment, that I preferred them to all others and find myself obliged to ask you for a pair for the polygraph I have here. Although I presume the fixed tube for receiving the pen-case is exactly alike in all the instruments, yet I inclose a wooden pin exactly fitting mine for greater security. It is better the pencase should be too large than too small for the tube because in the former case it is easily rubbed down. I salute you with friendship & respect.

THOS. JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, October 13, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

I have duly received your favor of the 8th, which excites a great curiosity in me to see Mr. Hawkins' polygraph, and

as you say you are sending one to the Secretary of State, which I know to be for his office, for it was on my recommendation, I will ask the favor of you to address it to me, that I may have an opportunity of seeing and trying it. It shall then be delivered to its address, and in the meantime will put me in possession of an estimate of Hawkins' improvements.

I salute you with friendship and respect.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

The two polygraphs you sent by the stage arrived in perfect order. The improvement in the writing apparatus is indeed precious. I find the pen now as light as a free pen. I immediately delivered to Mr. Madison the largest, with which he is well pleased, and I retain the smaller and more portable one. It pleases me extremely, and I do not know that I could desire an addition to it, but your screw pens. I do not think their weight would be objectionable, and to a person who writes with a fine pointed pen, a frequent adjustment is indispensable, and inconvenient without the screw. I am very apprehensive that the two boards, with all the care you can employ, will warp and defeat the accuracy of the copying pen. I have now packed up the one you brought here for me, and I should have sent it by the stage, but that we hourly expect a Philadelphia vessel here which is to return immediately & would certainly carry it more safely. However, as it is very securely packed, if she does not arrive immediately, I will send it by the stage. In the meantime I will keep and use the portable one, and should it be proof against warping, I would prefer keeping it, as I am persuaded that on the return of mine Mr. Beckley will be glad to receive it, that being the identical one he saw and was pleased with.

I must now ask the favor of you to furnish me with one for a friend in Europe to whom I wish to present it (Mr.

Volney) to be made in your neatest style, and in the portable form I am now using, to wit, Hawkins'. I think it would be better to equip it with a pair of screw pen-cases, and a pair of those which take in the whole quill, that he may suit himself. When ready, be so good as to notify me, without sending it on, as I may perhaps find an opportunity at Philadelphia of shipping it for France. Let me know at the same time what should be paid you for the exchange of the present polygraphs which I shall cheerfully remit with the price of the one to be now made. Accept my affectionate salutations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

I received last night your favor of the 14th. I continue extremely satisfied with the facility of writing with the new Polygraph. Mr. Hawkins' box may be considerably improved in its form. Instead of having it in the form

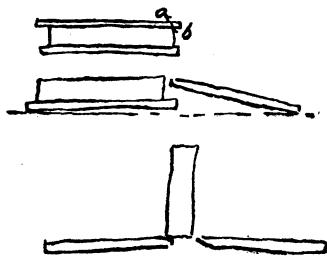


Fig. 1, the upper bed should on the hinge side, be beveled off at a.b. through its whole length (from west to east). Then when you wish to use it, not for copying, but as a common writing desk, the gallows remains in its horizontal position as a protection to the machinery and is more out of

your way, & the lid opens before you and presents an inclined plane for writing on with a free pen as in Fig. 2. When you want to copy it lies as in Fig. 3. In this case the long linked hinges must be left off. Indeed they are always useless and in the way. If the one you are making for me isn't too far advanced, I should like to have it made in this way. I have taken off the long hinges of the one I have, and unscrewed the other hinges from the

lid, and without beveling it, have used & continue to use it in the way I propose, & find it much more agreeable when I am not using the copying machinery, which is full half my time; so that I recommend this on experience. Accept affectionate salutations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.



P.S. I think it would be handsomer and take less room on the table to have no projection of either the lid or bottom, but to make it as a box with straight ends, & sides, except one beveled off as Fig. 4, and so would prefer mine.

C. W. PEALE, Esq.

WASHINGTON, November 28th, 1804.

DEAR SIR:—

Passing as I do the active hours of my life in my study, I have found it essential to bring all the implements I use there within the narrowest compass possible, & in no case to lose a single inch of space which can be made to hold anything. Hence everything is placed within my reach without getting out of my chair. On this principle I approve of the two drawers to the Polygraph proposed in your letter of the 25th. I observe in fact that in the one I am now writing with there may be in the west end a drawer of 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. square outside measure, and in the north east corner another of 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 6 in. which would hold paper, pens, penknife, pencils, scissors, etc. etc. and that the notch they would require in the gallows would probably not injure it. I have no hesitation therefore at approving it. The brass handles on the gallows had better be left off, and the brass grooves on the desk for the brass ruler to slide in. The ruler laid on the paper when you copy is as effectual & more convenient, & the grooves are in the way when you

use it as a common writing desk, without copying. Accept my friendly salutations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

MR. PEALE.

P.S. Since writing my letter of this morning it has occurred to me as better not to cut the gallows in order to let the drawers come through them, but to let them lie entirely within them, & draw out only when the gallows are lifted up. This would lessen the size of the drawers one way three quarters of an inch.

T. J.

(To be continued.)